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Fabian Society
(Great Britain)

A series of six lectures...
given by Bernard Shaw

Westminster...[Eng.]

1914

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given by Bernard Shaw ▾h [microform] ... ↔
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THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

A Series of Six Lectures

ON

REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

WILL BE GIVEN BY

BERNARD SHAW

AT

THE KINGSWAY HALL, KINGSWAY, W.C.,

ON

Wednesdays, 28th October, 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th November, and 2nd December, 1914, at 8.30 p.m.

Tickets for the Course: 21/- 10/6, 5/- Single Lectures: 5/- 2/6, 1/-

Applications for tickets should be made on the annexed form and addressed to The Fabian Society, 25 Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.

IT is not possible to furnish a complete syllabus of Mr. SHAW's lectures, as he has been compelled to turn aside from their preparation to deal with the more pressing subject of the war. In any case Mr. SHAW's platform practice is to speak extemporaneously and to be guided by the context of current events in choosing his illustrations and determining the order in which he will take the various sections of his subject; and therefore, though the propositions he will advance have been carefully considered and matured, being the conclusions to which he has been led during more than thirty years experience as a lecturer on Socialism, the Fabian Society could not offer a formal syllabus with any certainty that it would be followed closely enough to be of practical use to those who cannot attend the entire course and who may wish to select certain evenings.

All that can be said at this moment is that Mr. SHAW is distinguished in the Socialist movement as a strong advocate of economic equality in its most rigid sense of maintaining an exact and unconditional equality of income throughout the community, thereby returning to one of the simplest conceptions of old

fashioned Utopian Socialism, but re-establishing it on concrete grounds which have a much wider appeal than to professed Socialists, and which have never been presented before in this light either by Socialists or their opponents. Mr. SHAW contends that the most urgent measure of reform at present forcing itself on Parliament is not Redistribution of Seats or any other of the items in the party programs, but Redistribution of Income. It is certainly a fact that the revolt against the grotesque anomalies of the existing distribution has spread from Socialist discussion into general politics. A succession of Chancellors of the Exchequer, from the late Sir William Harcourt through Mr. Asquith to Mr. Lloyd George, have adopted methods of taxation which are openly redistributive; and in Old Age Pensions we have had an actual cash transfer of money from the pockets of the rich to the pockets of the poor, a step quite distinct from and far in advance of the old Poor Rates and of the taxation of the rich for public expenditure by which the poor incidentally benefit. It is difficult to contest Mr. SHAW's view that such taxation, if not based on carefully considered principles of redistribution, and carried out on the express ground that redistribution is necessary, honest and desirable, can be nothing but a demoralizing pillage of the rich by an abuse of the votes of the poor: an accusation often made by Mr. Lloyd George's political opponents, and hitherto unanswered by himself or his party. But his political opponents themselves do not dare to suggest that when their turn of office comes they can do otherwise than continue and indeed push forward this redistributive finance. These lectures are therefore more important to Liberals and Conservatives who set any store by political principle than to those Utopian Socialists who are already convinced of the need for redistribution for reasons which do not appeal to the ordinary citizen.

The subject cannot be exhausted in six lectures; but it can be covered fully enough for the purposes of all except those who are close technical students of political science. Mr. SHAW's power of making economic subjects attractive will not be unduly taxed on this occasion, as he will have to deal with some unexpected aspects of his theme. For instance, one of his lectures will be on Idolatry. He will have a good deal to say on Character and Talent, on Art and Religion, on War and Democracy, and on Morals and Manners; and he will deal with incomes and canons of taxation not as textbook abstractions, but dramatically, as human affairs.

Later on it may be possible to give the precise order and name the exact evenings on which these matters will be dealt with; but in view of the demand for tickets which an announcement of lectures by Mr. SHAW usually creates, it is probable that by that time the best of the available accommodation, if not all of it, will have been already disposed of.

NOTE.—If you have already received this announcement, will you be so good as forward this copy to a friend?

LECTURES BY BERNARD SHAW.

TO THE ORGANIZING SECRETARY, FABIAN SOCIETY,
25 TOTHILL STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

Please allot to me the following Tickets for the forthcoming Lectures at Kingsway Hall, for which I enclose remittance of £.....

COURSE TICKETS DESIRED:

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